

Loads of the Nations and Israel's Blessings

YAHWEH'S COMPASSION ON ISRAEL (14:1-3)

- 14 For Yahweh will have compassion `on Jacob,
And He chooses still in Israel,
And He leaves them on their own ground.
And the sojourners are obligated ^{on}to them,
And they are adherents ^{on}to the ^Ahouse of Jacob.
- 2 And ¹many^Q peoples take them,
And they bring them ¹to their ground and^Q to their
place.
And the ^Ahouse of Israel allots them
On the ground of Yahweh for servants and for maids.
And they come to be captors ^tof their captors,
And they sway ⁱover their exactors.
- 3 And this comes to be in the day Yahweh ^cgives ^{to} you
Rest from your grief, and from your disturbance,
And from the hard ^sservice in which you served.

The kingdom belongs to Yahweh's people, and to the house of David. Through them and through David's greater Son, Jesus Christ, the nations will be ruled and blessed. His dealings with them have this in view. Therefore He is compassionate with them in the evils He sends upon them in order to prepare them for their mission. Their sufferings are not a sign that He has forsaken them, but rather indicate the opposite. To help them bear their lot He foretells their blessings in advance.

YAHWEH STILL CHOOSES IN ISRAEL

By predicting the dominant affluence to which Babylon was to attain, the implications regarding Israel take on a most serious aspect. The disaster which was to overtake the city provides a convenient moment for the prophet to enter verses which affirm Yahweh's compassion on Israel. Yahweh still chooses in them, and Israel's blessing will quickly follow Babylon's downfall. Yet a twofold view of that deposing is being outlined by Isaiah. The mention of the Medes as a factor in bringing down Babylon really is an intimation that there is some complexity amidst the predictions, for what follows for Israel results from the sway of the Medes over Babylon. Later chapters will tend to impose items which separate this dual view more definitely, and contemporary and later prophets will also amplify it. Thus details which in Isaiah may seem to follow each other closely, are really far apart, the one being the past history which, to some degree, foreshadows the future day of Yahweh.

PARALLEL PASSAGES

These verses (1-3) are parallel with verses 24 to 27 in the skeleton. The latter give the more immediate assurance to Israel. The Assyrian, who was still a threat, was to be broken in Yahweh's land. This must be, before Babylon could emerge to eminence such as the past has seen.

KING OF BABYLON: (14:4-8) AN OPPRESSOR IS TO CEASE

- 4 And you ^Flift up ^tthis ^pproverb ^{on}against the king of Babylon,
And say ⁷in ^tthat day⁰, "How ceases the exactor!

- Ceases the ⁷audacious^{Qc} city!"
- 5 Yahweh has broken the ^Frod of the wicked,
 The ^Fscepter of rulers.
- 6 Smitten are peoples in a rage,
 A smiting barring withdrawal.
 Swaying, in anger, over nations,
 Pursuing, failing to keep back.
- 7 At rest, quiet, is the entire ^Aearth.
 Crash do they into jubilation.
- 8 Moreover, the ^Ffirs rejoice for you, the ^Fcedars of Lebanon:
 "Since you lie down, the ^Fcutter is not coming up against
 us."

The past saw joy amidst the faithful of Israel at the fall of Babylon, but the future will give greater reason for expressing their relief in a proverb concerning the passing of Babylon's king. How delightfully real prophecy appears when the joyous expressions of the future are already put into the mouths of the people! There is no better way of presenting the peace and prosperity of those days than foretelling their jubilant outbursts. Only Yahweh could predict in this fashion.

In this heading there is foretold what would ensue in the past of Babylon. The prophet moves to view those days and says of them: Yahweh has broken the rod of the wicked, the scepter of the ruler who smote peoples in a rage. That one's smiting was ruthless, swaying nations, pursuing, with no keeping back. Now the earth is quiet. This silence crashes into jubilation, in which the trees of Lebanon join, for no cutter comes against them (4b-8). The conquerors of old made free use of the precious timber from the cedars of Lebanon, to build their palaces and ships. This is part of the boast charged against Sennacherib, king of Assyria, by the prophet Isaiah (37:24). Of the large forest which once crowned the mountain only a few trees are now remaining.

TAUNT FROM THE UNSEEN (14:9-11)
 CONCERNING BABYLON'S KING

- 9 ^PThe unseen, beneath, is disturbed for you,
 To meet you at your coming.
 It rouses for you ⁷all⁰ the healers,
 All the ^Fhe-goats of the earth.
 It raises from their thrones all the kings of the nations,
- 10 All of them are answering and saying to you,
 "Even you are ill as what we were!
 To us are you comparable!"
- 11 Down to the unseen is ^cbrought your pomp,
 The ⁷throng^s of your exulters?
 The maggot is berthing under you,
 And the worm ⁷is covering^Q you^P.

To give the fullest emphasis to that which was to overtake the king of Babylon, who headed the world-kingdom, the event of his death is spoken of from two angles. In these verses (9:11) the reaction to his entry into the unseen is animated by personifying it. Yet in the parallel verses (16-20) we have what those consider who see his corpse when it is denied a tomb.

Truly earthly glory vanishes in the realm of the imperceptible at death. In the unseen (sheol) the soul of the most mighty monarch is on the same low level as all the rest of mankind. Literally, the body is devoured by maggots. Figuratively, the great ones of the earth boast over the world ruler's end. In contrast with him, Yahweh's King humbled Himself before His death, and was glorified in resurrection (Phil.2:5-11).

AN OPPRESSOR HAS FALLEN (14:12-15)

- 12 ^PHow have you fallen from the heavens!
Howl! Son of the dawn!
You are hacked down to the earth, defeater of ⁷all⁰
nations!
- 13 ^ayet you, you said, in your ^Fheart,
"To the heavens will I ascend!
^fAbove ^{to} the stars of El will I ^craise high my throne,
And I will sit in the mount of appointment,
In the flanks of the north.
- 14 I will ascend on the fane heights of a thick cloud;
I am likening myself to the Supreme!"
- 15 Yea, to the unseen shall you be ^cbrought down,
To the flanks of a crypt!

Continuing in the figurative strain, the world ruler is said to be so ambitious that he would fain have unseated the Supreme Himself, whether in the heavens, or on Mount Zion or Moriah, or in the thick cloud about His dwelling place. The fall of the oppressor was to be so great that it is figured as a fall from the heavens. This is in strict correspondence with the exalted boast, which was true of the past king of Babylon, and will also be the case with him who takes the greater role in the future, denying to Yahweh any rights in the earth He created. Instead of raising himself to the heavens, this one will be brought down to a place in a crypt. Those who attain the highest heights in opposition to Elohim will be accorded the lowest place in the end. The word "Lucifer" (14:12) of the Authorized Version has little relation to the Hebrew. It is not a noun, but rather a verb, the Hiphil Imperative of *ill*, HOWL. The plural form occurs at 13:6, where the Authorized Version renders it "howl." The words which follow ("Son of Dawn") are a concession to his boast, yet are used by the figure irony to introduce the warning of the next line.

TAUNT, BY THOSE SEEING, (14:16-20) CONCERNING BABYLON'S KING

- 16 Those seeing you will peer ^tat you and consider ^{to} you:
"Is ^tthis the man who was ⁷the^Q disturber of the ^Aearth,
¹The^Q quaker of kingdoms?"
- 17 He made ⁷all⁰ the habitance as a wilderness,
And its cities he demolished,
For his prisoners he opened not a homeward way."
- 18 All kings of nations — all of them lie in state,
Each man in his own house,
- 19 ^aYet you were flung from your tomb as a scion
abhorrent,
As ⁷many who⁰ were killed, spurred with a sword,
Who went down to the stones of the crypt
As a corpse being trampled.
- 20 You shall not unite ^twith them in the tomb,
"For you ruined ⁷My⁰land, You killed ⁷My⁰ people.
⁷You⁰ shall not be proclaimed for the eon,
You ^Aseed of evil ^cdoers^P!"

The living peer at him, and express themselves at what has befallen him. He quaked kingdoms and was relentless and unmoved even to give his prisoners the homeward way. Yet his weakness has been found by death, and the tomb is refused him, for he came to be a trampled corpse, in the melee of the capture of the city. Yet lesser kings of the nations lie in state!

FLUNG FROM HIS TOMB

The trail of destruction of the conqueror is so inhuman that he is not even accorded the usual burial of a king. His dishonor begins right after his death. In contrast, Yahweh's King, after suffering the shameful cross, immediately begins to be honored, for He was accorded a place in a rich man's tomb (Isa.53:9; Luke 23:50-53).

SLAUGHTER FOR THE SONS (14:21-22) OF BABYLON'S KING

- 21 "Prepare a slaughter for his sons,
ⁱFor the depravity of their fathers.
They will fail to rise and tenant the earth,
And fill the surface of the habitation with cities.
- 22 And I rise ^{on}against them," averring is Yahweh of hosts.
"And I cut off ^tfrom Babylon the ^Aname and remnant,
And propagator and progeny," averring is Yahweh.

The concluding lines of the prior segment dwell on the point that the king has ruined Yahweh's land and people. This issue is matched by a call to the army invading Babylon to prepare slaughter for his sons. They are involved in the depravity of their father. From the royal house of Nabopolassar came Nebuchadnezzar and his sons. It was exterminated. There was no tenancy in the earth any longer for it.

FOR BABYLON, DESOLATION (14:23)

- 23 "And I ^{pl}make ⁷Babylon desolate⁰,
For a tenancy of the hedgehog, ^awith watery
marshes,
And I ^Fmop it ⁱwith the ^Fmop of extermination,"
Averring is Yahweh of hosts.

Like the ruling house, so becomes its domain. Babylon is for desolation, and to be subject to floods. A tenancy for the hedgehog, a watery marsh, mopped by the mop of extermination. Yet that end foreshadows a still greater calamity, one which will consummate into God's kingdom in Israel.

COUNSEL BY YAHWEH (14:24-27) CONCERNING ASSYRIA

- 24 Sworn has Yahweh of hosts, ^{to} saying,
"Should it not, as ^w I likened it, so come to be,
And as ^w I counseled it, be arising?"
- 25 To ^Fbreak the Assyrian in My land,
And on My mountains will I ^Ftrample him.
And he withdraws his ^Fyoke from upon them,
And his ^Fburden shall he withdraw from upon their
^Ashoulder^b.
- 26 26 This is the counsel ⁱcounseled ⁷by Yahweh⁰ over the
entire ^Aearth,
And this is the ^Ahand ⁱstretched out
Over all the nations ⁷of the habitation⁰.
- 27 For Yahweh of hosts has counseled, and ^awho will annul
it?

And His ^Ahand is 'outstretched, and ^awho will reverse it?"

As the Babylonian empire was based on its conquest of the Assyrian, and both of these were used in the deportation of Yahweh's people, both then future events, the prophet reverts to the nearer invasion of Judah by Assyria and their miraculous destruction by Yahweh.

These verses should serve to encourage Judah since they remind of the prior prophecy (10:27-34) that Yahweh conquers. Now the Assyrian is to be broken in Yahweh's land, on His mountains. This is the great counsel by Yahweh of hosts against them. Who shall annul or reverse it? He Who so easily overthrew the Assyrian army will, with equal ease, deal with Babylon.

THE LOAD OF PHILISTIA (14:28-32)

28

^M^FLOAD OF PHILISTIA⁸

In the year of the death of 'King Ahaz ^bcame 'this ^Fload:
29 You must not rejoice, Philistia, any of you,
^PThat the club of your smiter is broken^P
^PFor from the root of the serpent shall come forth a yellow
viper,
And its ^Ffruit, the burning flying serpent^P,
30 And ^Fgraze do the firstlings of the poor,
And the needy shall trustingly ^Frecline.
^aYet I ^cput to death ⁱwith famine, your ^Froot,
And your remnant it will kill.
31 Howl, O ^Agate! Cry out, O ^ACity! Dissolved is Philistia!
All of you, for ^Asmoke comes from the north.
And no one shall be solitary in his appointed places.
32 And what will ⁷they^Q answer, the messengers of a nation?
That Yahweh founds Zion,
And in it the humble of His people will find refuge.

The Philistines had taken several cities from Ahaz (2 Chron.28:18). But the death of Ahaz did not confirm those cities to them, for Hezekiah, his successor, not only took them back but smote them as far as Gaza (2 Kings 18:8). From the standpoint of the Philistines, the Davidic kings were serpents. They thought that one had been crushed, but the words, "from the root of the serpent shall come forth a yellow viper," warned them that others would rise.

This load further warns Philistia (verse 31) and speaks of the smoke from the north, the signal of a hostile army. No one shall be solitary! Yet the Assyrians came from the north and they conquered all but Zion! Philistia sent messengers to seek a report concerning the destruction of the Assyrian army. They found the explanation to be that Yahweh founds Zion, and that He had made it a refuge for the humble of His people. This would give no comfort to Philistia, unless they discern from it that Yahweh, the Elohim of Judah, is over all. Philistia must bear the load He imposes upon them.

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